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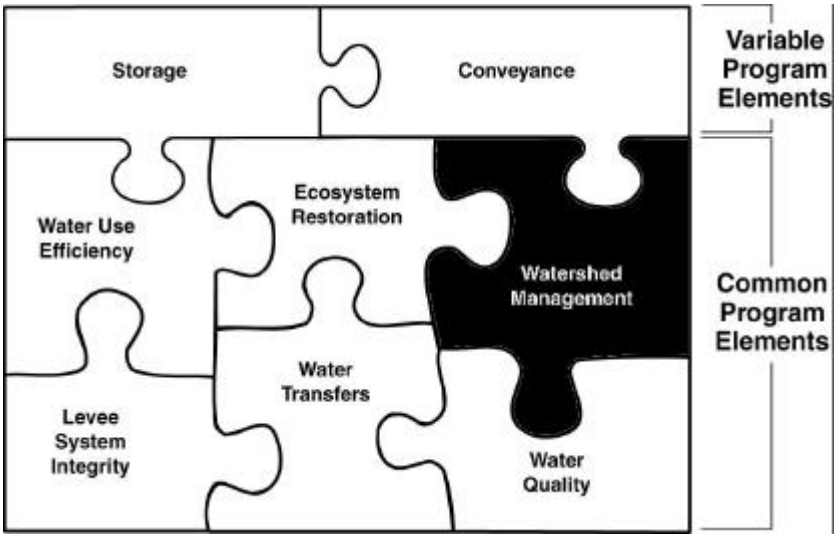
CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

Watershed Management Coordination Plan

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and the public to ensure a healthy ecosystem, reliable water supplies, good quality water, and stable levees in California's Bay-Delta system. The Watershed Management Coordination Plan is one of six Program elements common to each of the three potential solutions CALFED has developed, represents a significant investment in the system and will greatly reduce system conflicts.



Watershed Management is one of six Program elements common to each of the three potential solutions CALFED has developed.

The Goal

Encourage locally led watershed management activities that benefit all Delta system resources.

Ways This Can Be Accomplished

The CALFED comprehensive plan is based upon an integrated approach including watershed management. A watershed approach links the CALFED Bay-Delta Program goals and objectives on a regional basis and it encourages local watershed planning and management efforts. The watershed management element of CALFED has evolved into two focus areas: The upper tributary watersheds above reservoirs and major fish passage obstructions; and the lower watershed, generally below those obstructions.

Following are examples of watershed management projects that can make improvements in each CALFED resource area:

Ecosystem Quality —Watershed projects that improve riparian habitat along streams, increase or improve fisheries habitat and passage, restore wetlands, restore the natural stream morphology affecting downstream flows or species may benefit ecosystem quality.

Water Quality – Watershed management activities may benefit water quality in the Delta by helping to identify and control non-point sources of pollution and identify and implement methods to control or treat contaminants. Watershed projects that reduce pollutant loads in streams, lakes or reservoirs could measurably improve downstream water quality.

Water Supply Reliability – Meadows and riparian corridors in the upper watershed tend to slow the rate of runoff and allow more percolation of water into aquifers. When meadows and riparian corridors are degraded, runoff during storms can occur at higher rates. This makes flood management more difficult and reduces the opportunities to capture runoff in downstream reservoirs.

Levee and Channel Integrity – Attenuation of flood flows coming from the upper watershed can provide benefits far downstream in the system. Delta levees are most vulnerable during high winter flows, so watershed management that reduces these flows can help maintain the integrity of Delta levees.

Key Benefits

- Benefits ecosystem by increasing or improving fisheries habitat and passage, restoring wetlands, and restoring the natural stream morphology affecting downstream flows or species
- Watershed projects that reduce pollutant loads in streams, lakes or reservoirs could measurably improve downstream water quality
- Helps control excess flood runoff which threatens levees and decreases water supply opportunities

Issues & Concerns

- Watershed management strategy is not adequately developed and does not define clear goals and objectives
- Must emphasize partnerships among the public, local watershed organizations, and governments at all levels
- Program focuses too much on the lower watershed; efforts below and above the major dams must be integrated
- Watershed management strategy should be integrated with water quality and ecosystem restoration